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AUTHOR Coonrod, Debbie
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ABSTRACT

This study was designed to investigate the relationship between selected paternal child-rearing dimensions and the sex-role preferences of four-year-old nursery school children. The IT Scale for Children was used to assess the sex-role preferences of 50 boys and 50 girls and the Child-Rearing Family Practices Inventory was administered to their fathers. Four paternal child rearing factors were examined: (1) use of reward, (2) use of physical punishment, (3) Promotion of independence, and (4) strict discipline. Results showed that nearly all of the 50 boys had clear cut masculine preferences while the girls were more equally divided between those with clear cut feminine preferences and those indicating masculine preferences. Findings showed a correlation between paternal promotion of independence and boys' masculine sex-role preference. The sex-role preference of girls was not shown to be related to specific fathering behaviors. (JMB)

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*FOUR SELECTED PATERNAL CHILD-REARING PRACTICES AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO SEX-ROLE PREFERENCES OF FOUR-YEAR-OLD NURSERY SCHOOL CHILDREN

BY

DR. DEBBIE COONROD

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Four Selected Paternal Child-Rearing Practices and
Their Relationship to Sex-Role Preferences of
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Instructions concerning parental responsibilites in the rearing of children were recorded as early as the days of Moses' governmental and spiritual leadership of the Jewish people. Those directives continued to be expanded and emphasized. Guidelines found recorded in Deuteronomy 6:7; Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 6:4; I Kings's 11:1,2; Psalms 144:14; and I Timothy 5:14 suggested a parenting style that has facilitated the parent-child relationship down through the generations. Role expectations were spelled out to minimize social disorder and societal problems. The responsibility for child-rearing was largely charged to the father and was to be achieved through consistent repetition of instructions and supervision of the child's activity.

The need for more knowledge about alternative parenting styles and the consequental behavior of the young child has increased. Paternal absence through desertion, separation, and divorce has accelerated at increasing rates across our country; has created other familial crises; and has had decided influences on the young child's developing personality. (Santrock, 1973; Atkinson and Obston, 1974).

The traditional expectations for parenting behaviors have appeared to this researcher as rapidly being replaced with modified parenting models and with less explicit definitions or expectations for children's behavior regarding femininity and masculinity. This investigation focused on identifying the effects of four selected father factors thought to produce

masculinity and femininity in young children. Little research has focused on specific father behaviors and the interrelationship with masculinity and femininity.

Parental Approaches Today

Chamberlin (1965) has classified parental child-rearing ideologies and approaches according to three categories: a) the "autocratic" approach, b) the "indulgent-over protective" approach, and c) the "cooperative" approach. Chamberlin described these approaches as attitudes about anticipated child behavior which he believed were identifiable by the very way that parents handled specific behavioral incidents of their children.

Becker (1964) after correlating studies considered three general dimensions for looking at parent behavior: a) restrictiveness versus permissiveness, b) anxious-emotional involvement versus calm-detachment and c) warmth versus hostility.

Baumrind (1970) defined three authoritative patterns in her study of parent-child relations: a) the authoritarian parent, b) the authoritative parent and c) the permissive parent.

Schaefer (1959, 1961) developed from factor analysis of psychologists' ratings of parental behavior two orthogontal dimensions: a) love versus hostility, b) autonomy versus control. The vertical pole represented the role of the parent and the horizontal pole represented the role of the child.

Related Factors

Related factors have been isolated and identified which have appeared to be affecting child-rearing practices. Becker (1964) in reviewing the literature found that social-class was reflected in the general philosophy and execution of child discipline. He found that middle-class parents provided

more warmth while working class parents were more likely to use ridicule. Social class was interpreted in terms of the father's occupation.

Roy (cited in Becker, 1964) found environmental factors affected disciplinary practices, these being such things as the number of rooms in the house, the number of children, the closeness of the children to each other, the amount of physical space, the neighborhood safeness, sanitation, occupational circumstances, and educational experiences.

Dimensions of Paternal Styles

Subsequent studies have worked toward new approaches to discover those underlying consistent dimensions (Milton, 1958; Minturn, et al., 1964; Sewell, 1955) of child-rearing practices. The direction for most research contributed to the longevity and survival of the myth that the hand that rocked the cradle shaped the child and the world. Maternal importance in the young child's life has been well documented. The research on maternal child-rearing practices has provided a framework for considering the limited body of information regarding the practices of fathers.

Research regarding family practices as a unit has included the father in interview situations (Sears, Maccoby, and Levin, 1957). Dielman, et al., (1971), pioneers in isolating paternal child-rearing behaviors, factor analyzed data from the Sears, et al., interview questions and found seven basic factors: High use of reward and child-rearing, High use of physical punishment, Promotion of independence, Preference for younger children, Strict discipline, Low use of reasoning, Wife responsible for child-rearing, and Dissatification with home life. This questionnaire has become the Child-Rearing and Family Practices Inventory, Father Form, 1971.

Fathers have exerted a great deal of influence on the sex appropriate

behavior of girls and boys. Theories differ in what they propose as the influence that fathers have on masculine sex-role development of boys. One theory has suggested that father represents a model similar to a map showing the major outline but lacking details (Lynn, 1959). The Oedipal conflict resolution according to Freud has occurred around five or six years of age. In the case of the girls, and according to social learning theory, the girl has been receiving reactions from other people and learning how attractive and how socially poised she has become within her social environment (Kagan, 1964). In the cognitive-developmental theory, a sequence of developmental awareness of the male and female sex-role constructs have been followed in gender identity (Friedland, 1972; Lynn, 1959; and Kohlberg, 1966). The Juedo-Christian heritage of our culture has emphasized the status and appeal of fatherhood and masculine superiority.

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between four specific child-rearing practices in the sex-role preferences of four-year-old nursery school children. The four factors studied were those paternal personality attributes which consistently occurred in previous research.

Hypotheses

The eight null hypotheses were: (1) Paternal promotion of independence will show no significant relationship to ITSC scores of four-year-old girls. (2) Paternal promotion of independence will show no significant relationship to ITSC scores of four-year-old boys. (3) Paternal strictness will show no significant relationship to ITSC scores of four-year-old girls. (4) Paternal strictness will show no significant relationship to ITSC scores of four-year-old boys. (5) Paternal use of reward will show no significant rela-

tionship to ITSC scores of four-year-old girls. (6) Paternal use of reward will show no significant relationship to ITSC scores of four-year-old boys. (7) Paternal aggression and punishment will show no significant relationship to ITSC scores of four-year-old girls. (8) Paternal aggression and punishment will show no significant relationship to ITSC scores of four-year-old boys.

Methodology

This study was designed to investigate the relationship between four father child-rearing dimensions and the sex-role preferences of four-year-old nursery school children as indicated by scores in the IT Scale For Children.

Selection and description of subjects. The 100 four-year-old nursery school children were chosen from nursery schools in three southern Indiana metropolitan areas. Selection of the children was determined by age, living with the natural father and natural mother in an intact home setting, and regularly enrolled in one of the participating nursery schools. In addition, the father of each child had agreed in writing to the participation of his nursery school child and himself in the study. The chronological age of the 100 children in the sample measured from birth to date of the ITSC interview, ranged from 48 months to 59 months. A total of 50 boys and 50 girls were included in the sample. All children were enrolled in one of ten licensed nursery schools in one of three metropolitan areas.

The four-year-old nursery school child was chosen as the subject for this study in light of the literature which has indicated that boys generally after the age of three consistently make masculine choices and have continued to show even higher masculine preferences at increased ages

(Hartup, 1960). Girls after the age of four have made both masculine and feminine choices as they have begun to appreciate the more highly valued male role in our society (Brown, 1956; Hartup, 1960).

All participating fathers were initially contacted by the investigator by a letter requesting cooperation in the research study. The chronological ages of fathers of the sample nursery school children ranged from 25 years to 44 years for the boys and from 20 years to 44 years for the girls. The fathers of the 100 children ranged throughout the seven occupation categories on Hollingshead's Two Factor Index of Social Position. All but one of the fathers were high school graduates.

Testers. Testers, all female, were trained by the investigator for using the ITSC and for using the scoring sheets. Training consisted of the tester practicing the sequence of the pictures until thoroughly familiar with the instrument.

The sex of the experimenter has been shown in three studies (Borstelmann, 1961; Doll, et al., 1971; and Hetherington, 1965) to have had no effect on the sex-role preference of children up to the age of twelve with either lower-class or middle class children. Epstein and Liverant (1963) has indicated that boys with masculine scores were influenced toward more masculinity with male experimenters.

ITSC. The ITSC, a semi-projective instrument, has been widely used since 1956 to assess sex-role preference of children. Each child was asked to play a game with the tester (investigator or trained tester) in an adjoining room. Using the IT Scale For Children, the tester then asked the child to make choices from 36 pictures shown "It," a stick figure child unstructured to sex. Each child was then thanked by the tester and returned to the classroom.

Possible scores on the ITSC ranged from 0, an inclusively feminine scored to 84, an inclusively masculine score. Scores of 42 would represent a mid-point preference between masculine and feminine preferences. Scores above 42 represented a direction toward greater masculinity and scores below 42 reflected a greater preference for femininity.

CRFPI. The Child-Rearing Family Practices Inventory administered to all fathers consisted of sixty-eight questions adapted by Dielman, et al., (1973). The factors which were used in this investigation were High use of reward in child-rearing; High use of physical punishment; Promotion of independence; and Strict discipline. Variable identification was exactly the same as that described by Dielman, et al., (1973). Eighteen of the sixty-eight questions on the CRFPI applied to the four specific dimensions of this study.

The four father factors focused on in this study represented father personality attributes most often indicated by the literature as related to masculine sex-role development, particularly in boys. Little has been said about the personality of girls' fathers. Paternal dominance (Hetherington and Frankie, 1967; 1965); salience and power (Mussen and Distler, 1959); paternal warmth (Sears, Maccoby, Levin, 1957), and availability (Yarros, 1964) were frequently father personality attributes indicated in studies regarding masculine gender development.

Analysis of the data. A Pearson product-moment correlation of father scores with ITSC scores was made and a Pearson product-moment correlation for the intercorrelation of the CRFPI scales was also made. The ANOVA did not contribute any additional significant findings to the study.

An underlining assumption of the study was that sex-role preferences existed in the cognitive choices of young children and would be found by

using the ITSC. For boys, scores from 0-30 were considered feminine preferences; 40-44 were determined intermediate preferences between the two poles; and 45-84 marked a masculine preference (See figure 1).

Results and Discussion

The distribution of scores overlapped in the directions suggested in the review of literature (Brown, 1959; Gree, 1974; Hartup, 1960). Boys can be seen in Figure 1 to have exceeded girls in preference toward the masculine components on the ITSC. The study indicated a more exaggerated sex-role profile for boys. More girls appeared to be ambivalent or confused in their sex-role preferences than did boys. Only three more girls indicated clear-cut feminine preferences than they indicated masculine preferences. When compared to the 48 of the 50 boys the same age making a clear-cut masculine preference, the feminine role in our culture was again forcefully demonstrated as affording girls a greater latitude in choices.

These findings have underscored the findings of other research that has concluded that when the boy has seen his father becoming involved in his life there has been greater sex-role preference in the specific direction of that involvement. Neither punishing fathers nor rewarding fathers were significantly correlated ($p < .05$) with the Paternal promotion of independence scales. The sex-role preference of girls here, as in other studies, has not been shown to be related to specific fathering behaviors.

While these findings have supported literature in our society, it differed with the preferences of Okinawin girls, (Kobasigawa, 1959). These preschool girls appeared to more readily assume and desire the feminine profile.

Correlated findings and discussion: The correlated findings of this study have been shown in Table 1.

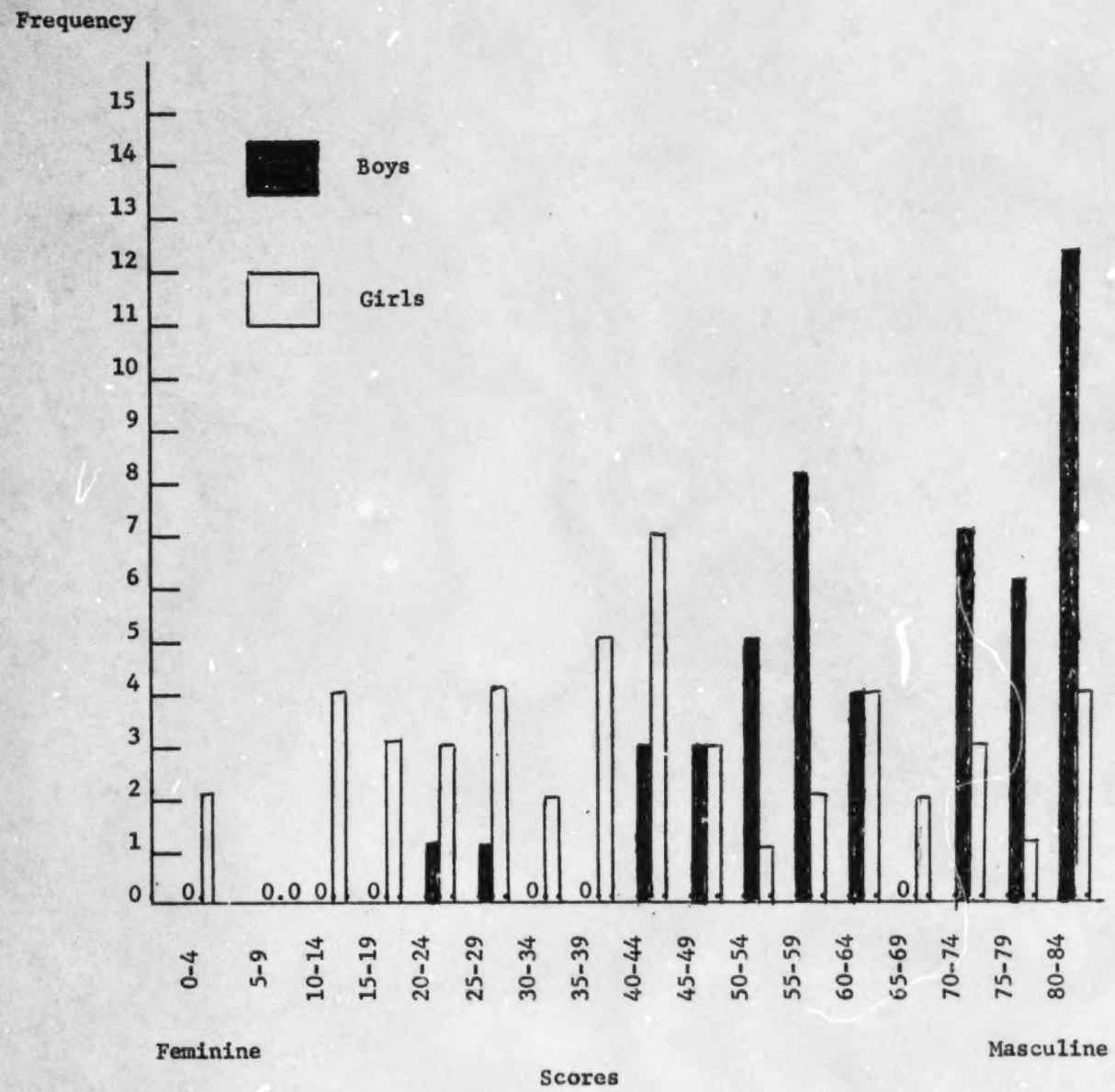

Figure 1. Distribution of Scores on the ITSC for Total Sample (Boys and Girls)

TABLE 1. PEARSON PRODUCT-MOMENT COEFFICIENTS FOR CORRELATIONS BETWEEN SELECTED PATERNAL CHILD-REARING PRACTICES (CRFPI) AND SEX-ROLE PREFERENCES OF FOUR-YEAR-OLD NURSERY SCHOOL (ITSC).

	Paternal promotion of independence	Paternal strictness	Paternal use of reward	Paternal aggression and punishment
Boys (ITSC) Scores	.2653	-.1245	-.1541	-.0154
Girls (ITSC) Scores	.0322	-.0913	-.0984	-.2272

*=coefficients = masculinity, -coefficients = femininity, Paternal promotion of independence with boys $p < .05$.

Note the intercorrelation of scales that has been shown in Table 2. While Paternal strictness has correlated significantly with the scale Paternal aggression and punishment, just what this correlation means can be questioned because of the suspected reliability of the Paternal strictness scale (Cronbach's Alpha Reliability = .27).

TABLE 2. PEARSON PRODUCT-MOMENT CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS FOR THE INTERCORRELATION OF CRFPI SCALES.

	Paternal use of reward	Paternal aggression and punishment	Paternal promotion of independence	Paternal strictness
Paternal use of reward	1.00			
Paternal aggression and punishment	.08	1.00		
Paternal promotion of independence	.09	.10	1.00	
Paternal strictness	-.04	.32*	.07	1.00

*$p < .001$ The Paternal strictness scale did not hold together in homogeneous fashion in the study.

An ANOVA did not significantly alter the direction of the findings. The Paternal promotion of independence factor began to approach significance at the .05 level for boys (.063) and was closely followed by the factor Paternal use of reward (.105) for boys. For girls the factor Paternal punishment and aggression approached the .1 level of significance (.113).

Conclusions

The significance of the correlations between Paternal promotion of independence and the masculine sex-role preference has suggested a paternal expectation for young boys to solve and maintain peer and similar relationships without father interference. The lack of a correlation between Paternal strictness as physical punishment and any masculinity preference scores had consistently been shown in previous research. Nor has the lack of a correlation between paternal rewarding of their boys for appropriate behavior and masculine preference scores differed from other studies. The absence of a relationship between any of the paternal factors and feminine preference scores again corresponded with the literature regarding the limited paternal influence on the feminine preference of young girls.

The study has indicated that the dichotomy of behaviors for boys and girls has continued to exist in the 1970's. The strength of the masculine preference was indicated with 48 or 50 boys scoring on the masculine end of the pole. The flexibility of appropriate behavior for young girls again has been supported. This study has emphasized the continuing existence of different preferences based on sex already at a very young age. Activities that respond to these different preferences must be included in all curriculum planning. Staffing of pre-school programs will have served young children better when staff provided models of both sex roles.

Repeated findings of the two distinct sex-role preferences by age four

would seem to demand the study be begun with even younger boys, girls, and their fathers.

The fathers of this study were interested in opportunities to share paternal role problems and solutions and to secure information through research. Increased availability of programs for fathers has become a priority for educational programs. These fathers expressed concern that for the first time in the four years of their child's life, they had met as a father with other fathers. They also despaired that their paternal skills were modeled primarily from those of their fathers.

The self-report father forms frustrated paternal subjects who wanted to explain responses, give examples and make inquiries. The majority, however, indicated that they neither would have been able to participate, nor would they have been comfortable in participating in a research design based on recorded observation of paternal behaviors. A more sensitive scale for father's child-rearing influences is needed. Research grants and honorary could stimulate the development of instruments for measuring paternal behaviors and could initiate research activity investigating the implementation of paternal personality and behavior with consequental dimensions of the child's behavior.

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